



More Cite Gov't as Top U.S. Problem; Inflation Ranks Second

Description

Story Highlights

- Government citations up six points; inflation mentions steady
- Economic Confidence Index low and unchanged at -39
- 64% say it is a good time to find a quality job in the U.S.

USA: More Americans name the government as the nation's top problem in Gallup's latest poll, which encompassed the rocky start of the 118th Congress' term. With high prices persisting, inflation remains the second most-cited problem (15%), and amid elevated tensions about the southern U.S. border, illegal immigration edged up three percentage points to 11%. Mentions of the economy in general fell six points, to 10%, the lowest reading in a year.

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The poll's Jan. 2-22 field period included the four-day, 15-vote process in which Republicans, who now hold a slim majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, ultimately elected Kevin McCarthy to be Speaker of the House. Revelations about classified government documents from 2009 to 2017 found in President Joe Biden's private office and home also surfaced while the poll was in the field. Although mentions of the government as the nation's top problem rose six points this month to 21%, job approval ratings of [Biden](#) (41%) and [Congress](#) (21%) remained flat.

The government ranks as the top problem for both Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (24%) and Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (18%). Inflation and immigration are each cited by 18% of Republicans, while mentions of inflation (11%), the economy in general and race relations (9% each) trail the government among Democrats. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to view unifying the country and the environment as top problems.

Economic Confidence, Job Market Assessments Flat but Worse Than a Year Ago

Gallup regularly tracks Americans' ratings of national economic conditions as excellent, good, only fair

or poor, as well as their views on whether the economy is getting better or worse.

Currently, more than four in five U.S. adults rate economic conditions in the country as only fair (38%) or poor (45%), with few describing conditions as excellent (2%) or good (15%). Furthermore, 72% of Americans say the economy is getting worse, 22% say it is improving, and 4% think it is staying the same.

The resulting Economic Confidence Index, which summarizes responses to the current conditions and economic outlook items, has a theoretical range of +100 (if all respondents say the economy is excellent or good and that it is getting better) to -100 (if all say it is poor and getting worse). The latest -39 reading is identical to last month but well above the [-58 score last June](#) amid high gas prices and the record low of -72 in October 2008, during the Great Recession. The ECI has been in negative territory since July 2021, when the U.S. inflation rate was on the rise.

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In contrast to their negative evaluations of the economy in general, Americans are positive about one aspect of it — the job market. Currently, 64% of Americans say it is a good time to find a quality job in the U.S., which is statistically unchanged from last month but eight points lower than the January 2022 reading.

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Bottom Line

Americans' mentions of the government as the nation's most important problem have risen significantly in the past month, while inflation remains the next most-cited issue. Fewer name the economy in general, yet when asked about the economy directly, Americans continue to lack confidence in its current and future health. Views of the job market remain largely positive, but they are diminished from one year ago. While the U.S. unemployment rate remains relatively low, recent layoffs in the technology sector could affect opinions about the job market, and possibly the broader economy, in the coming months.

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